REMARKS

The Applicant and his attorney wish to thank Examiner Nguyen and Examiner Amsbury for their courteousness extended during the telephone interview on Thursday, December 11, 2003. During this interview, the differences between the method and apparatus of the present invention and the teachings of the Snow reference were discussed. Also discussed was the double patenting rejection issued in the Office Action.

The Applicant respectfully requests further examination and reconsideration in view of the amendments above and the arguments set forth fully below. Claims 1-49 were previously pending in this application. Within the Office Action, claims 1-49 have been rejected. By the above amendments, claims 1, 14, 27, 37, 41, 42, 43, and 47 are amended. Accordingly, claims 1-49 are currently pending.

Double Patenting

Within the Office Action, claims 1-40 and 42 have been provisionally rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as claiming the same invention as that of claims 1-96 of co-pending Application No. 09/801,138, and claims 41 and 43-49 have been provisionally rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as claiming the same invention as that of claims 1-42 of co-pending Application No. 09/799,032.

The amended independent claim 1, 15, 25, 39, 49, 63, 73, and 87 of Application No. 09/801,138 and the amended independent claims 1, 14, 27, 37, and 42 of the present application vary in scope. Specifically, the amended independent claims 1, 15, 25, 39, 49, 63, 73, and 87 of Application No. 09/801,138 are directed to performing a search using a search module, where the search module includes three different types of search methodologies. The amended independent claims 1, 14, 27, 37, and 42 of the present application are directed to performing a search using a search module that includes four different types of search methodologies. Therefore, the amended independent claims within the present application and the amended independent claims within the Application No. 09/801,138 are not directed to the same invention.

The amended independent claims 1, 12, 23, and 34 of Application No. 09/799,032 and the amended independent claims 41, 43, and 47 of the present application also vary in scope. Specifically, the amended independent claims 1, 12, 23, and 34 of Application No. 09/799,032 are directed to formatting a searchable database into a directory tree structure, accessing a discrete data item via a navigation path and one or more set parameters, setting a notification signal, triggering the notification signal, and notifying the user. The amended independent claim 41 of the present invention is directed to repeatedly performing a search of a directory tree structure using a search module including four different types of search methodologies, accessing

a discrete data item, setting a notification signal, notifying a user in response to triggering the notification signal, accessing the directory tree structure and obtaining data by an external system using an applications programming interface (API), and displaying data from the directory tree structure in an encyclopedia-like format. The amended independent claim 43 of the present application is directed to repeatedly performing a search of a directory tree structure using a search module including four different types of search methodologies, and accessing a discrete data item using a query string. The amended independent claim 47 of the present application is directed to repeatedly performing a search of a directory tree structure using a search module including four different types of search methodologies, and accessing the directory tree structure and obtaining data by an external system using an applications programming interface (API). Therefore, the amended independent claims within the present application and the amended independent claims within the Application No. 09/799,032 are not directed to the same invention.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

Within the Office Action, claims 1-3, 6-16, 19-40, and 42 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,098,066 issued to Snow et al. (hereafter "Snow").

Snow teaches formatting a searchable database into a tree structure of directories. Snow teaches categorizing documents, and then performing a keyword search by first specifying the category in which the keyword search is to be performed and then performing the keyword search within that category.

As acknowledged in the Office Action, the Snow reference applies to a selective one search methodology, a keyword search. However, Snow does not teach a search model that inclusively has four different types of search capabilities including a keyword search capability, a hierarchical search capability, a dichotomous key search capability, and a parametric search capability. It is acknowledged in the Office Action that Snow does not teach at least the dichotomous key search.

By the above amendments, the independent claims are amended to clarify that the present invention includes a search module. The search module includes a keyword search capability, a hierarchical search capability, a dichotomous key search capability, and a parametric search capability. Any of these four search methodologies can be used to complete a research task, either independently or in any combination thereof.

Amended independent claim 1 is directed to a method of performing a research task within a searchable database. The method of claim 1 comprises the steps of utilizing a search module to correlate a search criteria to a searchable database for generating one or more matching items, wherein each matching item corresponds to a segment of the searchable database, further wherein the search module includes a keyword search capability, a hierarchical search capability, a dichotomous key search capability, and a parametric search capability, utilizing the search module to correlate a subsequent search criteria to one of the matching items for generating one or more subsequent matching items, wherein each subsequent matching item is a sub-segment of the matching item used to generate the subsequent matching item, and further wherein the subsequent search criteria is a selective one of the search criteria and a different search criteria, and repeating the above steps until the research task is completed. As discussed above, Snow does not teach using a search module including four different types of search capabilities. For at least these reasons the independent claim 1 is allowable over the teachings of Snow.

Claims 2, 3, and 6-13 depend on the independent claim 1. As described above, the independent claim 1 is allowable over the teachings of Snow. Accordingly, claims 2, 3, and 6-13 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Claim 14 is directed to a research system for performing a research task within a searchable database. The research system of claim 14 comprises means for accessing the searchable database, and means for utilizing a search module coupled to the means for accessing to correlate a search criteria to the searchable database for generating one or more matching items, wherein each matching item corresponds to a segment of the searchable database, further wherein the search module includes a keyword search capability, a hierarchical search capability, a dichotomous key search capability, and a parametric search capability. As discussed above, Snow does not teach using a search module including four different types of search capabilities. For at least these reasons the independent claim 14 is allowable over the teachings of Snow.

Claims 15, 16, and 19-26 depend on the independent claim 14. As described above, the independent claim 14 is allowable over the teachings of Snow. Accordingly, claims 15, 16, and 19-26 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Claim 27 is directed to a research system for performing a research task within a searchable database. The research system of claim 27 comprises a research server configured to utilize a search module to correlate a search criteria to the searchable database coupled to the research server for generating one or more matching items, wherein each matching item corresponds to a segment of the searchable database, further wherein the search module includes

a keyword search capability, a hierarchical search capability, a dichotomous key search capability, and a parametric search capability, to utilize the search module to correlate a subsequent search criteria to one of the matching items for generating one or more subsequent matching items, wherein each subsequent matching item is a sub-segment of the matching item used to generate the subsequent matching item, further wherein the subsequent search criteria is a selective one of the search criteria and a different search criteria, and to repeat the utilization of the search module to correlate a subsequent search criteria to one of the matching items for generating one or more subsequent matching items, wherein each subsequent matching item is a sub-segment of the matching item used to generate the subsequent matching item, further wherein the subsequent search criteria is a selective one of the search criteria and a different search criteria, until the research task is completed. As discussed above, Snow does not teach using a search module including four different types of search capabilities. For at least these reasons the independent claim 27 is allowable over the teachings of Snow.

Claims 28-36 depend on the independent claim 27. As described above, the independent claim 27 is allowable over the teachings of Snow. Accordingly, claims 28-36 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Claim 37 is directed to a network of devices for performing a research task within a searchable database. The network of devices of claim 37 comprises one or more computer systems configured to communicate with other systems, and a research server configured to couple to the one or more computer systems to utilize a search module to correlate a search criteria to the searchable database coupled to the research server for generating one or more matching items, wherein each matching item corresponds to a segment of the searchable database, further wherein the search module includes a keyword search capability, a hierarchical search capability, a dichotomous key search capability, and a parametric search capability, to utilize the search module to correlate a subsequent search criteria to one of the matching items for generating one or more subsequent matching items, wherein each subsequent matching item is a sub-segment of the matching item used to generate the subsequent matching item, further wherein the subsequent search criteria is a selective one of the search criteria and a different search criteria, and to repeat the utilization of the search module to correlate a subsequent search criteria to one of the matching items for generating one or more subsequent matching items, wherein each subsequent matching item is a sub-segment of the matching item used to generate the subsequent matching item, further wherein the subsequent search criteria is a selective one of the search criteria and a different search criteria, until the research task is completed. As discussed above, Snow does not teach using a search module including four different types of

search capabilities. For at least these reasons the independent claim 37 is allowable over the teachings of Snow.

Claims 38-40 depend on the independent claim 37. As described above, the independent claim 37 is allowable over the teachings of Snow. Accordingly, claims 38-40 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Claim 42 is directed to a method of performing a research task within a searchable database. The method of claim 42 comprises the steps of utilizing a search module to correlate a search criteria to the searchable database for generating one or more matching items, wherein each matching item corresponds to a segment of the searchable database, further wherein the search module includes a keyword search capability, a hierarchical search capability, a dichotomous key search capability, and a parametric search capability, utilizing the search module to correlate a subsequent search criteria to one of the matching items for generating one or more subsequent matching items, wherein each subsequent matching item is a sub-segment of the segment of the searchable database, and further wherein the subsequent search criteria is a selective one of the search criteria and a different search criteria, selecting one of the subsequent matching items, and displaying a collection of related data corresponding to the selected subsequent matching item into an encyclopedia-like format, wherein the encyclopedia-like format includes text, graphics, and links to related objects. As discussed above, Snow does not teach using a search module including four different types of search capabilities. For at least these reasons the independent claim 42 is allowable over the teachings of Snow.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Within the Office Action, claims 4, 5, 17, and 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Snow in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,327,588 issued to Danish et al. (hereafter "Danish").

Claims 4 and 5 are dependent on the independent claim 1. Claims 17 and 18 are dependent on the independent claim 14. As discussed above, the independent claims 1 and 14 are each allowable. Accordingly, claims 4, 5, 17, and 18 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Within the Office Action, claims 41 and 43-49 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Snow in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,292,796 issued to Drucker et al. (hereafter "Drucker").

As discussed above, Snow does not teach using a search module including four different types of search capabilities. Drucker teaches a keyword search methodology where the search

results can be sent to a user using a conventional push technology. However, Drucker does not teach using a search module including four different types of search capabilities.

Claim 41 is directed to a method of performing a research task within a searchable database. The method of claim 41 comprises the steps of performing one or more searches by utilizing a search module, the search module including a keyword search capability, a hierarchical search capability, a dichotomous key search capability, and a parametric search capability, to correlate a search criteria to a searchable database for generating one or more matching items, wherein the searchable database is formatted in a directory tree structure and each matching item represents a node from within the directory tree structure, wherein the node is a collection of related data, and further wherein as each successive search is performed the generated matching items represent nodes which reside further down the directory tree structure than the node from which the successive search is performed, categorizing each item of data by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters which are specific to the node in which the data is included, accessing a specific node within the directory tree structure using a query string, wherein the query string defines the navigation path through the directory tree structure to access the specific node within the directory tree structure, accessing a discrete item of data using the query string and one or more set parameters and setting a notification signal by saving the query string and the one or more set parameters, notifying a user of new data entered into the searchable database in response to triggering of the notification signal, wherein triggering of the notification signal occurs when new data is entered into the searchable database and the navigation path and set parameters of the new data match the query string and set parameters saved according to the set notification signal, accessing one or more nodes within the directory tree structure and obtaining data from the one or more nodes by an external system utilizing an applications programming interface, wherein the applications programming interface accesses the one or more nodes within the directory tree structure using the query string, and displaying the collection of related data for a particular node in an encyclopedia-like format, wherein the encyclopedia-like format includes text, graphics, links to related topics within the directory tree structure, links to related web sites external to the directory tree structure, or any combination thereof. As discussed above, neither Snow, Drucker, nor there combination teach using a search module including four different types of search capabilities. For at least these reasons the independent claim 41 is allowable over the teachings of Snow, Drucker, and their combination.

Claim 43 is directed to a method of performing a research task within a searchable database. The method of claim 43 comprises the steps of performing one or more searches by

utilizing a search module, the search module including a keyword search capability, a hierarchical search capability, a dichotomous key search capability, and a parametric search capability, to correlate a search criteria to the searchable database for generating one or more matching items, wherein the searchable database is formatted in a directory tree structure and each matching item represents a node from within the directory tree structure, wherein the node is a collection of related data, and further wherein as each successive search is performed the generated matching items represent nodes which reside further down the directory tree structure than the node from which the successive search is performed, categorizing each item of data by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters which are specific to the node in which the data is included, and accessing a specific node within the directory tree structure using a query string, wherein the query string defines the navigation path through the directory tree structure to access the specific node within the directory tree structure. As discussed above, neither Snow, Drucker, nor there combination teach using a search module including four different types of search capabilities. For at least these reasons the independent claim 43 is allowable over the teachings of Snow, Drucker, and their combination.

Claims 44-46 depend on the independent claim 43. As described above, the independent claim 43 is allowable over the teachings of Snow, Drucker, and their combination. Accordingly, claims 44-46 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Claim 47 is directed to a method of performing a research task within a searchable database. The method of claim 47 comprises the steps of, performing one or more searches by utilizing a search module, the search module including a keyword search capability, a hierarchical search capability, a dichotomous key search capability, and a parametric search capability, to correlate a search criteria to the searchable database for generating one or more matching items, wherein the searchable database is formatted in a directory tree structure and each matching item represents a node from within the directory tree structure, wherein the node is a collection of related data, and further wherein as each successive search is performed the generated matching items represent nodes which reside further down the directory tree structure than the node from which the successive search is performed, categorizing each item of data by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters which are specific to the node in which the data is included, and accessing one or more nodes within the directory tree structure and obtaining data from the one or more nodes by an external system utilizing an applications programming interface, wherein the applications programming interface accesses the one or more nodes within the directory tree structure using a query string, wherein the query string defines the navigation path through the directory tree structure to access the

specific node within the directory tree structure. As discussed above, neither Snow, Drucker, nor there combination teach using a search module including four different types of search capabilities. For at least these reasons the independent claim 47 is allowable over the teachings of Snow, Drucker, and their combination.

Claims 48 and 49 depend on the independent claim 47. As described above, the independent claim 47 is allowable over the teachings of Snow, Drucker and their combination. Accordingly, claims 48 and 49 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

For the reasons given above, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-49 are now in a condition for allowance, and allowance at an early date would be appreciated. Should the Examiner have any questions or comments, he/she is encouraged to call the undersigned attorney at (408) 530-9700.

Respectfully submitted,
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